

Sent: Wednesday, September 21, 2022 12:40 PM  
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Isaiah 1

"Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord; though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool!" (Isaiah 1:18)

Rather than starting with an account of his dramatic intervention and calling from God to prophecy, when he actually "saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted...and himself as a man with unclean lips, living among a people with unclean lips..." (which we'll have to wait until chapter 6 to learn about in more detail), Isaiah begins his writing with the charge (for all!) to "Listen, O, heavens, and hear, O earth; for the LORD (Yahweh) speaks"! And (in verse 10), "hear the word of the LORD...and give ear to the instruction of our God"!

And "speak" the LORD, indeed, did! (And listen we must!) Concerning those He called His "sons" (the "children of Israel" and descendants of Abraham) who He said He "reared and brought up," who have "revolted against" Him! And who have less understanding than animals, and are "weighed down with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, who act corruptly, and have abandoned Him"! Even despising "the Holy One of Israel"! Whose heads are "sick", and hearts are "faint...!"

And the diatribe continues! Their "land is desolate, their cities are burned, and "strangers are devouring their fields in their presence"! And "unless the Lord of hosts" (the God of the Armies of heaven," which name is used some 260 times in the Old Testament), had left a few survivors (a "remnant"!), they would be like Sodom and Gomorrah"! Wow! (Some of this is obviously prophecy of things to come, perhaps anticipating the invasion of Assyrians, or even devastation further into the future! And even our future! This will be the pattern throughout the book of Isaiah!)

The ultimate insult for Judah and Jerusalem (and anyone!) is to be likened to Sodom and Gomorrah, perhaps the biggest example in the Bible of sheer wickedness (and judgment, and extinction)!

And then to "hear the words of the LORD (Yahweh!) vent not only on their worldly wickedness, but on their "religiousity," and "goodness," all of which became a "facade" (which, in fact, originated with the laws of Moses)! "I've had enough of burnt offerings of rams...and take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats...your worthless offering! Incense is an abomination to Me... I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts!" Wow!

(Wiersbe notes that a prophet's job is focus on the present and well as the future; to "tell forth" the Word of God, as well as to "foretell" the works of God! And that a true prophet is like a good doctor: to first diagnose the case, then to prescribe a remedy, and then to warn the patient what will happen if the prescription is ignored! And that's exactly what Isaiah appears to be doing!)

So, what does God "prescribe" and desire of us?

It begins (as verses 16-17 says) with "washing ourselves and making ourselves clean, ceasing to do evil, learning to do good, seeking justice, etc..." but how could the children of Israel do all that? (And how can we?) They were given the Mosaic law (and a "covenant" } which told them how they were to live, to a tee! There were accompanying "blessings and cursings" (as enumerated in Deuteronomy 28). They learned of a righteousness that God required, but which they found they couldn't achieve! The apostle Paul would later write (under inspiration from God, of course) that "the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith!" And so, the need for a Savior! And a new covenant, which Jeremiah would prophecy about, in Jeremiah 31:31-33! And which Isaiah would call for (in Isaiah 7:14, and 9:6): "The Lord Himself will give you a sign, a virgin will bear a son...and call His name Immanuel...A son will be given to us, and the government will rest on His shoulders...Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace...!" And more! (All of which Isaiah would prophecy about, under divine inspiration, yet having no idea of what he was talking about!)

And it's amazing how we see the tone of Isaiah 1 changing with verse 18, as Isaiah records the gracious words of the Holy One of Israel: "Come now, and let us reason together, says the LORD though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they will be like wool"! He will make a way! Wow!

And while more words of great judgment follow here and throughout the book of Isaiah (as we'll see!), restoration and redemption follow even more (thank-you, Lord!), and are possible to experience, as God reveals His plan for the ages--for Israel, and the whole wide world--through His prophet, Isaiah!

Can't wait for more as we get a foothold into the study of this great book!

May God bless your week!

Lowell